

# Meeting minutes, Jan. 22, 2008

## Opening

A meeting of the Utah Upland Game Advisory Committee was held on this date.

## Present

Jim Gaskill, Chair

Dave Olsen, (DWR Upland Game Program Coordinator)

John Staley (Utah Chukar and Wildlife Foundation UCWF), Jon Leonard (National Wild Turkey Foundation), Ed Kent (Wildlife and Habitat Legislative Coalition, Central Region RAC Chair), Dan Potts (Salt Lake County Fish and Game), Hal Smith (Pheasants Forever), Dave Dahlberg (USU graduate student), Randy Larsen (USU graduate student), Ernie Perkins (observer, non-voting), Craig McLaughlin, (DWR Wildlife Section Chief), Joe Morinski, (Utah hunter education), Bret Dixon, (UCWF), Scott Mulvey, (UCWF), Landon Beard, (UCWF), Randy Danjanowich (UCWF), Ray Lee, Alan Smith (Box Elder Tourism), Caleb Stroh (UCWF), Paul Edstrom, Bob Hurley ((UCWF), Jess Hosberger (Pheasants Forever), Kelly Anderson, Newton Gaskill, Steven Gaskill

**Welcome:** Jim Gaskill introduced Dave Olsen, the new Upland Game Program Coordinator to the committee and welcomed all participants

## Old business:

A. Proclamation (Guidebook) Review and recommendations.

1. Chukar Season Start/End. Recommendation: Move season start/end back two weeks (start in October, end in February).  
*Discussion:* Later end might put too much pressure on the birds (significant discussion), but might encourage greater hunter participation. Habitat damage from ATVs and full-sized vehicles, occurring in the early season when birds are concentrated at water is also a significant reason for moving the season. Support for later start. Chukar Foundation supports statewide unified 1<sup>st</sup> Sat in Oct. start and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Feb. end.
  - a. *Motion: Support starting the chukar season on the First Saturday of October and end on the second Sunday of February.* Motion Carried, with 3 opposing.
2. Chukar Season uniform closing date.

*Discussion:* Conditions that precipitated the varied closing dates only occur every 10 years or so. Division can implement emergency closure. But hunters are used to split seasons. Resource may suffer in East side—hunter population is centered there. Split seasons may concentrate hunters on West side, though. Request input from regions at the RAC meeting. Split bag limits instead of dates? Significant hunter confusion exists regarding the split season boundaries. Dave Olsen asked for hunter journals—email to Dave or submit to the Committee for compilation and submission. Evidence indicates that hunting pressure is not major factor in chukar populations.

a. *Motion 1: Unified statewide season dates. Support 15. 3 Oppose. 1 Abstain (Ernie abstained).* Motion Carried.

b. *Motion 2: One general hunting season closing Feb. w/3 bird bag limit in previously closed seasons.* Failed for lack of second.

3. Sage Grouse season. Recommendation: Season to run from 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. in Oct to Friday before general deer season.

*Discussion:* Birds group up, in large flocks, in October, though, increasing vulnerability—ought to limit bag to 1 bird. Wariness increases, though, Division limits bags to 10% and controls the limits every year. Reducing breeding hen mortality when broods are together is a reason for moving the season. Wyoming has changed season to October. May alter season length to mitigate. Harvest data is good for Sage Grouse. Moving the season to October affects how wing data is evaluated. Pending endangered species litigation and federal regulatory response may also affect Sage Grouse regulation.

a. *Motion: Keep season at current length, but move start date to October. 1 Oppose, 13 support.* Motion Carried.

4. Sharp-tailed Grouse. Make Cache County season same as Box Elder season.

*Discussion:* Access issues with Cache County, though—much of land is private. Most of leks in Box Elder County are on private land, too. Walk-in access land in Cache County has Sharp-tails. Some landowners also have granted permission. Division may want to ease into increased permits for Cache County.

a. *Motion: Sharp-tailed grouse season for Cache County.* Unanimous support. Motion Carried.

5. Forest Grouse. Have season start at Sept. 1, and run to Dec. 31 statewide.

*Discussion:* Sept. 1 start simplifies the regulations. Concern with concurrent bow hunting season. Early season may result in high chick take—ethical concerns. Nesting changes from year to year, though. Idaho and Wyoming open the first weekend. Could change to Sept. 15. Extending season, however, may keep low pressure while increasing opportunities. Hunting pressure on grouse is probably not determinative of population. Many bird hunters don't hunt in October. Could conduct youth grouse hunt.

- a. *Motion 1: Extend forest grouse season to end of year. Unanimous support. Motion carried.*
- b. *Motion 2: Keep opening at second week of Sept. Amended: Put season opener at 15<sup>th</sup> Sept. 3 Support. 11 Oppose. Amendment failed. 4 Support. 10 Oppose. Motion fails.*
- c. *Motion 3: Change start to Sept. 1. 14 Support. 3 Oppose. Motion carries.*

6. Pheasant.

- A. Unified statewide season length season.

*Discussion:* Simplified season and additional opportunities. Roosters are easy to identify, so hunting impact on population is minimal. Lengthen season to Dec. 31. Landowner and Farm Bureau concerns militate against lengthening season.

- a. *Motion: Unified season throughout state. Unanimous support. Motion carried.*

- B. Plant pen-raised birds on WMAs, with additional permit to pay for planting.

*Discussion:* Pen-raising and permit proposal would require substantial planning. Idaho conducts similar program.

- a. *Motion: Division should investigate WMA program for pheasants similar to Idaho's program (additional hunting permit for the WMA pays for additional birds). Unanimous support. Motion carried.*

7. Limit hunting and/or parking to areas surrounding guzzlers.

*Discussion:* Guzzlers have even been damaged by shotgun fire.

Regulations in Box Elder County already limit publicly accessible roads. Dove hunters may oppose.

- a. *Motion: Division should educate hunters on ethics of hunting near guzzlers in guidebook. Unanimous support. Motion carried.*

8. Increasing proclamation cycle to five years from current three years. Limited discussion, no recommendation.

9. Non resident youth hunting license fees.

*Discussion:* Most states do not charge nonresident fees for youth hunters. It may encourage more youth to hunt in Utah. Their adult companions would buy non resident licenses. Would require legislative action.

- a. *Motion: Suggest that non-resident youth fees should be same as resident youth fees. Unanimous support. Motion Carried.*

**B. Youth Hunts.**

Dan Potts (Tooele) /Ernie Perkins (Howell)

Pheasant hunt went well. The new area near Howell worked well. Lower grass level was good for the youth. Harvest wasn't as high as last year (in North). Birds were healthy, good fliers. Harvest was good and many girls participated (in South). One youth was hit by a stray pellet (in South). Adult supervisors aren't currently required to have hunter's safety or even have a license. Craig McLaughlin stated that the Division is reviewing how the youth hunts take place.

**New business**

**A. Pending legislation**

Ed Kent

Ed updated the committee on legislation in this year's session that might impact sportsmen and the DWR. The following bills were discussed:

Administrative Rules Penalty Amendment.

Guides and Outfitters regulation.

Aquaculture Revitalization Act. Instream Flow.

Deer Season Start Date Changes.

Aquatic Nuisance Species Interdiction Provisions.

Computer Assisted Remote Hunting.

None of these bills were directly related to upland issues,

but all attendees were encouraged to be more active in the legislative process.

B. Sharp-tail lek survey.

Jim Gaskill

Jim reported that we expect to participate in the spring survey as usual. He will be looking for volunteers

### **Other Items**

B. Flagging coyote traps—would improve hunting dog security. Division could put dog removal procedures on website.

C. A short discussion of CRP land access. Some suggested that CRP property should be open to hunting access. Committee was reminded of new walk-in access program that has been successfully implemented in Northern Utah. It is expanding and hopefully will be statewide soon. .

D. Wild Turkey update

Jon Leonard

Turkey permit numbers increasing. We could arrive at over the counter sales within 3-5 years. Important to keep in mind hunter interference and safety. National Turkey Foundation will present youth clinics and safety seminars, and will distribute safety DVDs, perhaps to all hunter safety graduates. Great game management success story.

### **Possible Items for next meeting:**

A. Committee should consider new chair—current chair is serving on Northern RAC and Habitat Council.

B. Randy Larsen will give an update of his chukar and guzzler study at next meeting.

C. Dave Dahlberg will present his sage grouse study results at meeting following. Box Elder Sage Grouse experts could present at third meeting.

D. Blue grouse management plan.

E. Upland game survey.

### **Adjourn**

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the DWR State offices at 1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City.

Everyone is invited to attend these meetings; it's an opportunity for you to get any issues you know about onto the table.

Let us know of donations, projects, etc., made by your group we want to publicize good activities!

If you know of other interested parties who should get copies of the minutes, and who are involved in upland game organizations or programs, please get us their name. If you want to make an electronic mail input, please send it to one of the following:

- Dave Olsen, [davewolsen@utah.gov](mailto:davewolsen@utah.gov)
- Jim Gaskill, [jhgaskill@weber.edu](mailto:jhgaskill@weber.edu)

### **Upland game on the Internet**

You can get more Utah upland game information at <http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/> including the past minutes for this committee, news, proclamations, and information about upcoming public meetings.

\*Respectfully submitted, Steve Gaskill.